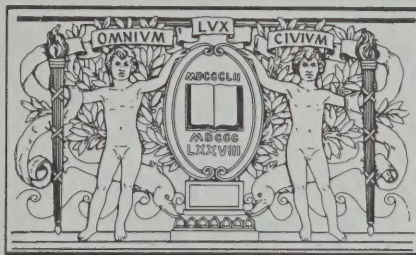
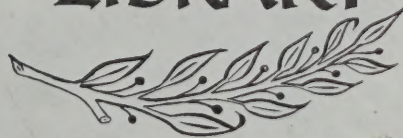


Δ
M3/B16
RA
74/14

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 06585 694 8



BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY



13/B16
RA
74/14

BACKGROUND TO PLANNING FOR
THE DEVELOPMENT OF BOSTON'S
SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR

GOV DOC



Paper Prepared for the
BRA-MIT-Urban Dynamics Advisory Committee, Inc.
Boston Project
Dialogue Series on
Planning and Development for Boston's Future

A Parkman Urban Affairs Center Program

March 1974

Kevin H. White, Mayor
City of Boston

Francis W. Sargent, Governor
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Robert T. Kenney, Director
Boston Redevelopment Authority

Anthony Pangaro, Coordinator
Southwest Corridor Development
Program

INTRODUCTION

For the 1970's, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the City of Boston have the challenging opportunity to plan and execute the revitalization of an economically depressed area located within a short distance from Boston's downtown. The Southwest Corridor offers a unique set of choices and constraints for Boston's planning and development effort over the next ten years. Favorable resolution of key problems in these areas -- coupled with imaginative pursuit of the development potential in these neighborhoods -- can lead Boston toward achieving important goals for the people and the economy.

The November 1972 policy announcement on transportation strategy for the Boston Metropolitan Region, by Governor Francis W. Sargent, which also reflected the views of the City, anticipated the appointment of a Southwest Corridor Development Coordinator, which was made in July of 1973, with the concurrence of Mayor Kevin H. White, Redevelopment Authority Director Robert T. Kenney, and members of the community. The Coordinator is responsible for determining

the development potential of Corridor land and managing and coordinating the activities of State level transportation agencies, so that neighborhood development goals are maximized. These functions are being carried out in close cooperation with the City and with local neighborhood groups now organized in a Southwest Corridor Working Committee.

There are specific and major roles which the Southwest Corridor communities will play in Boston's planning and development effort. These roles include providing neighborhood job opportunities, upgrading income levels, redeveloping deteriorated areas, improving transportation and public facilities, upgrading the commercial centers, enhancing the occupational skills of local residents, and providing new housing and recreation facilities. Since the largest impacts of development will occur in the Roxbury portion of the Corridor area, this discussion of the Corridor potential focuses mainly on this community.

Development of the Southwest Corridor area is significant in providing a new source of job opportunities for Boston's neighborhood residents. In the next decade, the bulk of the

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Boston Public Library

City's job growth will occur downtown. However, job growth in Boston's neighborhoods is also important, since it offers new opportunities for the skilled and the semi-skilled resident labor force. Development of commercial and office space can provide a certain number of white collar and semi-skilled jobs while new construction of the industrial parcels will bring back some of the blue collar jobs lost in previous years.

An increase in jobs is also important in promoting the upward mobility of the local households. Upgrading of income levels in these less privileged communities will ensure their full participation in the City's overall projected growth in income levels.

Falling property values, decaying housing conditions, rising crime, declining commercial investment, dislocation of at least 400 homes and of numerous businesses in preparation for the Southwest Expressway signaled deterioration in the Corridor communities. More than 15 years of uncertainty regarding the location and construction of the expressway has helped in this deterioration process. More than 100 acres were cleared by the Department of

Public Works before the moratorium was declared. This deterioration was particularly costly since it involved the City's less privileged residents and communities. Many of the residents in these communities (especially North of Forest Hills) are lower income, unskilled, renters of their homes, and unemployed or underemployed. Because of the high incidence of no car or one-car ownership, there is a heavy dependence on public transportation for access to jobs, education, leisure and shopping activities. Revitalization of the deteriorated Southwest Corridor communities is crucial to the City-wide effort to achieve gains in the quality of life in all of Boston's neighborhoods. New opportunities will be created to meet the needs of these residents and to alleviate the existing conditions of urban blight.

Revitalization of the Southwest Corridor area is largely possible because of the unique combination of a few sizable development parcels -- some of which are already vacant -- and the partnership between state and local government and local residents who will work together in designing

the neighborhood development plans. Undoubtedly, the key factor to success in future development and private sector investment is this commitment of the public sector and the community groups in planning and implementing programs. This involvement is beginning to emerge in the City's new policy on revitalizing the public facilities and capital improvements in the neighborhoods.

Plans for the transportation improvements and upgrading of neighborhood commercial centers are going a long way toward providing a basic public sector stimulus for future commitments by the private sector. Transportation improvements will play a major role in enhancing the Southwest Corridor communities and in improving access to the adjacent neighborhoods. These transportation facilities are being designed and located to maximize the development potential of the area.

Institutions also play an important part in the development of this area. An Occupational Resource Center being considered in the nearby neighborhood of the South End could improve the occupational skills of the resident labor

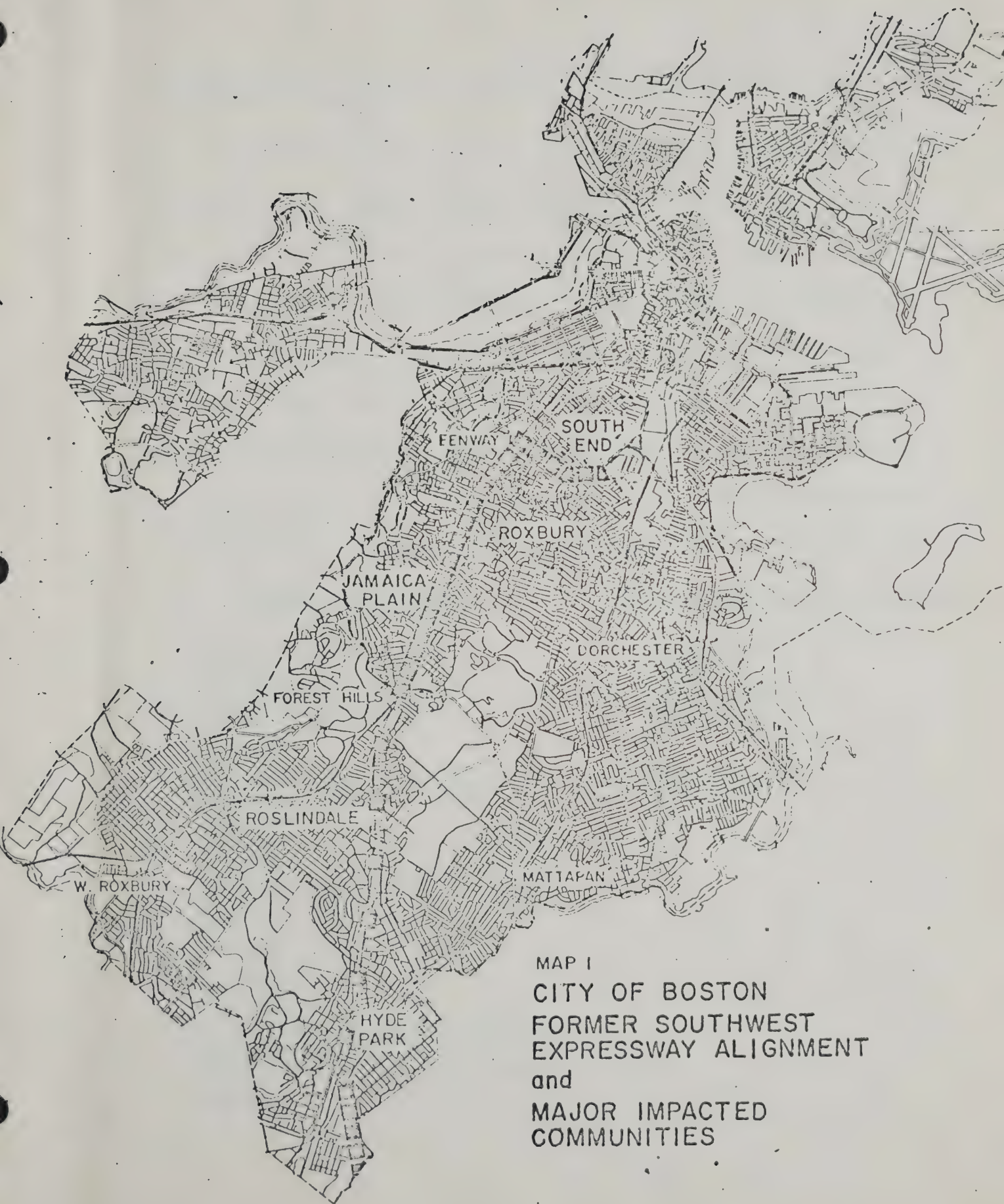
force, facilitating a larger participation in the City-wide job market.

Prospects for new housing and residential related uses are good. In the Roxbury area of the Corridor there are possibilities for constructing some housing for low and moderate income households and for the elderly. This area could represent a larger share of the City-wide new construction for these income groups, since the need is great in this area.

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The Southwest Corridor extends along the Penn Central railroad line from Ruggles Street to the Dedham line passing through or adjacent to the communities of Fenway, Jamaica Plain, South End, Roxbury, Roslindale, Hyde Park, and Readville. Transportation improvements reaching from the main line will affect North Dorchester and Needham.

See Map 1. All together, these neighborhoods account for a little less than one-third of Boston's total population and one-tenth of the metropolitan area's population. One-half of the 240,000 Corridor residents live in areas close to the Penn Central tracks.



MAP I
CITY OF BOSTON
FORMER SOUTHWEST
EXPRESSWAY ALIGNMENT
and
MAJOR IMPACTED
COMMUNITIES

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING IN THE BOSTON REGION AND THE SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR

Plans to build new roads and extend the Boston public transportation system began earlier in the century. In 1948, the Massachusetts Department of Public Works published the Master Plan, providing for a major interstate system which would become eligible in 1956 for 90 percent federal funding. This system featured six radial expressways and three circumferential expressways, some of which were built and others which were eventually dropped. These expressways and their current status of construction are indicated below:

<u>Radial Expressways</u>	<u>Circumferential Expressways</u>
1. <u>Southeast Expressway</u> complete	1. <u>Inner Belt</u> dropped
2. <u>Southwest Expressway</u> (Route I 95 South) dropped	2. <u>Route 128</u> complete
3. <u>Massachusetts Turnpike</u> <u>Extension</u> (Route I 90) complete	3. <u>Route I 495</u> complete
4. <u>Route 2</u> complete from Route 128 to Alewife; Route 2 to Inner Belt dropped	
5. <u>Route I 93</u> complete	
6. <u>Route I 95 North and Northeast</u> <u>Expressway</u> -partially constructed; Route I 95 through Lynn Woods- dropped.	

The purposes and outlook of this post-World War II Transportation Plan placed heavy emphasis on: 1) the expressway program as the priority program to improve Boston's transportation system; and 2) the radial expressway system as the major system for the core-oriented peak period movement. During this period, public transportation, which had begun deteriorating and losing patronage, became viewed as the secondary system in Boston's overall transportation network.

As this Expressway Plan was implemented, it encountered objections from some of the communities through which the expressways passed. In these early stages, the community opposition was not sufficient to alter the basic Master Plan. However, the opposition gained momentum with the proposed construction of the Inner Belt. Numerous groups, including road building agencies, planners, residents, politicians, city and state agencies -- questioned how and where the road should be built. By May of 1960, Cambridge residents were questioning the need for the road.

In the summer of 1966, a nonprofit group called "Urban Planning Aid" was organized to counteract the Department of Public Works, the Bureau of Public Roads, the Governor, the highway interests, and the consultants. Later that year, this organization published its critique of the Greater Boston's transportation plans, representing the first call for a moratorium on major highway construction. Urban Planning Aid also began doing advocate work in the communities since the controversy had spread to include the remainder of the unbuilt radial expressway system. This group was the first major one to compile the facts, figures and arguments to counter the one-sided transportation planning focus of the Department of Public Works.

The basic arguments used by this group and other major opponents to the Expressway Plan were that building highways increased traffic and pollution, disrupted neighborhoods, took badly needed housing, decreased local tax bases, destroyed open space, and obliterated businesses and jobs.

As the controversy raged over Boston's transportation problems during the next three years, other forces, especially at the national level, gained momentum to support such opposition. Community participation became accepted, advocacy efforts were being funded by the federal government, demonstrations and protests against the status quo involved

more average citizens and therefore became "legitimized", and finally opposition against highway interests began spreading in other major urban centers. Thus, by 1969 both the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts were primed to accept a major rethinking on the Greater Boston transportation system. In October of that year, Governor Sargent appointed a special task force to examine the highway planning and decision process and by December Mayor White had petitioned the Governor to declare a moratorium on highway construction in the Boston area.

These events form the backdrop for Governor Sargent's decision, early in 1970, following his task force recommendations, to halt construction of several major highway facilities within the Route 128, including the Inner Belt and the Southwest Expressway, pending a full scale review of the transportation plans and programs for transit and the neighborhoods in the metropolitan area. He directed the Boston Transportation Planning Review to prepare transit and highway alternatives, to explore the regional and local implications of a balanced transportation policy on the neighborhoods and the transit choices being considered, to involve the local communities in the planning process,

and to consider what alternative uses might be made of the over 100 acres of land which had already been acquired and cleared by the Department of Public Works in the event no expressway was constructed.

The Southwest Corridor Development Coordinator was appointed by the Governor in July of 1972. To date, the major effort of the office of the Southwest Corridor Development Coordinator, together with citizens' groups and state and local agencies, has been to determine how best to develop the cleared land and where and to what extent to locate the various transportation facilities.

PLANNING FOR SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

Planning for the Southwest Corridor and adjacent areas will focus on the major resource of the area -- almost 175 acres potentially available for future development, about one-half of which is in Roxbury. Land use development plans for the Corridor will be designed with the advice of communities to emphasize benefits to these neighborhoods. Transportation routes and investments are being designed to

enhance the land use potential. Some notion of the magnitude of the capital investment projects and prospects for development is suggested by the land use proposals for the Corridor and adjacent areas, which totaled almost \$2 billion. Another \$30 million for new arterial street constructions and some \$400 to \$600 million for new transit services (excluding the estimates for circumferential transit) show the range of investments to be made for transportation facilities.

Planning work by the Development Coordinator, his staff and consultants, the BRA and the City of Boston and the community groups is currently involved in identifying the key opportunities, the development sites and their potential within the Corridor area. Land uses presently being considered include: several industrial, job-producing parcels; several mixed use commercial parcels, one at the area's major intersection with the adjoining institutional establishments and one potentially useful for a hotel/convention center; sites for office facilities; parcels for low-rise, family housing; regional and local recreation facilities which tie to the Olmstead network; and sites for school and other

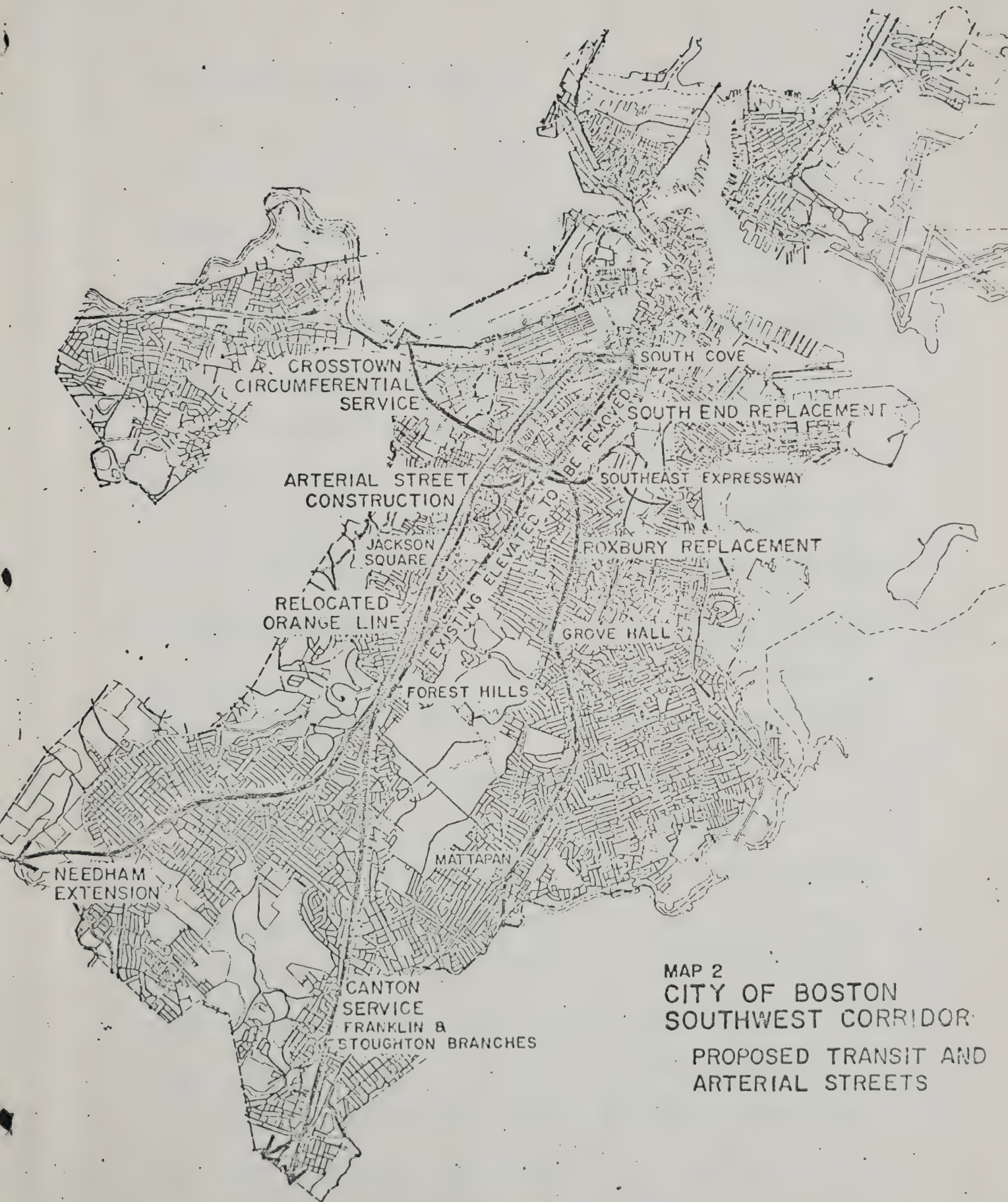
community facilities. These parcels could be aggregated with the adjacent underutilized parcels to enhance their development prospects.

Several different agencies and community groups are participating in the generation of these land use proposals. The next stages in analyzing the development potential of the Corridor land is to confirm the economic feasibility and to identify the economic impacts of proposed developments. This impact analysis would concentrate on five major aspects: investment cost, employment, population, public costs, and tax revenue benefits. The impact of new development in the Corridor would be shown in terms of the present conditions and the future -- 1980, 1985 and 1990. The City of Boston and the Boston Redevelopment Authority are actively working with the State Development Coordinator in exploring the economic issues and implications of this development.

Other areas to be examined include: market analysis, cash flow analysis for specific development parcels, exploration of incentives for job-producing industries; and the necessities of local development corporations.

Planning for the street and transit elements is well along. The new street will extend from City Hospital crosstown to Ruggles Street at Columbus Avenue and then parallel the transit line to at least Jackson Square. Extension beyond this point to Forest Hills is still under study. See Map 2.

The transit element includes plans for relocating the Orange Line roughly parallel to the present Penn Central tracks from Forest Hills into town. It is the preference of the Commonwealth that all of the Orange Line transit tracks be depressed below grade. Other transit improvements include the provision of a replacement service for the South End from downtown to Dudley Station, a Roxbury service to Grove Hall, a circumferential transit service, and the Orange Line extension from Forest Hills to Needham. Options for the South End include either Green Line trolley service a la Beacon Street or a reserved right-of-way bus service to downtown. Roxbury options all provide a new service to Grove Hall and range from a subway to electric buses. The context of decisions within this range is perceived as directly related to the kinds of development the options imply. See Map 2.



MAP 2
CITY OF BOSTON
SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR

PROPOSED TRANSIT AND
ARTERIAL STREETS

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Full development of the Corridor area will be a long-term process, involving numerous public agencies, community groups, and private investors. Development opportunities represented by the Southwest Corridor are significant, but they will be affected and channeled by certain limiting factors. These factors define the major requirements for successful development in the Corridor.

First and foremost, is that major investments in the public infrastructure must occur in the Corridor in order to maintain and improve the viability of the neighborhoods in the area as well as to stimulate private investment. These public sector investments must also be integrated and staged in an overall plan for development.

Secondly, the initial public investments in the Corridor area could be made to: 1) improve the configurations of parcels for development; 2) improve the local accessibility along the Corridor; 3) provide services and/or amenities which will both serve the adjacent communities and make sites which are still undeveloped more attractive for future use; and 4) reinforce the desired long range land development plan.

Thirdly, because of the long time period necessary to absorb the cleared land, the selection and implementation of interim land uses will play a major role in achieving the ultimate land use plan.

Fourth, Boston and the Nation is in a period of new federalism where the federal role has been significantly reduced. No one sector will dominate future development efforts, rather, cooperative ventures will have to be forged between government agencies, local community groups, and private investors. Successful development of the Corridor area will require a commitment from the private sector to cooperate with the Area's residents in attaining the social and economic goals of the entire community as well as in strengthening their economic base. Community based developers will play a large role in the private development in the Southwest Corridor over the next decade.

Fifth, revitalization of the Southwest Corridor area, dependent though it is on public investments, requires a substantial commitment from the private financial sector. Prospects exist for major investments in the areas of housing construction, commercial and industrial development, and potential institutional construction.

Redevelopment of the Southwest Corridor will be greatly aided by certain mechanisms which currently exist at the

local, state and federal levels. The City of Boston has industrial development powers. The State, which will also construct the transportation facilities, has a housing finance agency and business assistance programs. Crucial Federal financing mechanisms are also vitally important: business loans, replacement housing subsidies, and front-end economic planning funds will be necessary, among others. The Title VII (new town) program may also be appropriate.

State representatives and officials have filed development corporation legislation in an effort to create a public development entity. Also available are private development mechanisms such as State Section 121A corporations, as well as renewal type parcel disposition.

local, state and federal levels. The City of Boston has

industrial development projects. The state, which will

also construct the transportation facilities, has a

housing finance agency and business assistance program.

Other federal financial assistance programs are also vital.

Industrial business loans, equipment financing facilities,

and technical assistance programs will be necessary.

Some of the other programs will have been discussed in the

past.

State representatives and officials have filed

development corporation legislation in an effort to

create a local development agency. Also needed are

public development agencies such as those in other cities.

corporations, as well as various other public institutions.

